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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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09/883,241

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Mario Martinelli

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EXAMINER

MOONEY, MICHAEL P

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2883

DATE MAILED: 09/27/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/883,241

Applicant(s)

MARTINELLI ET AL.

Examiner

Michael P. Mooney

Art Unit

2883

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 May 2004.
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-17 is/are pending in the application.
4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
5) ☒ Claim(s) 6 and 8-13 is/are allowed.
6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 7, 14, 16-17 is/are rejected.
7) ☒ Claim(s) 5 and 15 is/are objected to.
8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Prior arguments are moot in light of the following new grounds for rejection.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claims 1, 3, 4, 7 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102b as being anticipated by Hawes (3728030).

Hawes fig. 1 teaches an input light path for receiving a light signal having an arbitrary polarization state (see to the left of splitter/divider 30); a divider 30 arranged in the input light path to split the light signal into first and second components; a first interferometric arm (31 and downstream) arranged to receive from the divider the first component of the light signal; a second interferometric arm (32 and downstream) arranged to receive from the divider the second component of the light signal; an output path (13) for outputting the light signal from the first and second interferometric arms; at least one polarizer (75) arranged either in the first and second interferometric arms, or in the output path, to define an output polarization state for the light signal; and at least one retarder (col. 7 lines 52-59; col. 11 lines 28-44) arranged in at least one of the first and second interferometric arms to generate first and second polarization states in the first and second interferometric arms, respectively, that are orthogonal to each other for at least one polarization state of the input light signal so that the first polarization state is

Art Unit: 2883

transmitted by the at least one polarizer and the second polarization state is absorbed by the at least one polarizer, thereby to output the light signal in the output polarization state defined by the at least one polarizer. (See: col. 4 lines 15-25; col. 5 lines 30-50; col. 7 lines 30-59; col. 9 lines 9-32; col. 11 lines 28-44).

Thus claim 1 is met.

Hawes fig. 1 teaches teaches a device according to claim 1, further comprising a combiner (depicted at right side of splitter 30) arranged to combine the first and second components of the light signal into the output path. Thus claim 3 is met.

Hawes fig. 1 teaches teaches a device according to claim 1, wherein the at least one polarizer comprises a polarizing element placed in the output path (e.g., 14, 76, 75). Thus claim 4 is met.

Hawes fig. 1 teaches a device according to claim 1, wherein the at least one retarder comprises a retarding element arranged in the first interferometric arm. (col. 7 lines 50-59). Thus claim 7 is met.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Art Unit: 2883

The factual inquiries set forth in *Graham v. John Deere Co.*, 383 U.S. 1, 148 USPQ 459 (1966), that are applied for establishing a background for determining obviousness under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) are summarized as follows:

1. Determining the scope and contents of the prior art.
2. Ascertaining the differences between the prior art and the claims at issue.
3. Resolving the level of ordinary skill in the pertinent art.
4. Considering objective evidence present in the application indicating obviousness or nonobviousness.

JJA
9-20-04
Claims 2, 14, 16-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. ^{103a}~~102b~~ as being unpatentable over Hawes (3728030).

Hawes fig. 1 teaches an input light path for receiving a light signal having an arbitrary polarization state (see to the left of splitter/divider 30); a divider 30 arranged in the input light path to split the light signal into first and second components; a first interferometric arm (31 and downstream) arranged to receive from the divider the first component of the light signal; a second interferometric arm (32 and downstream) arranged to receive from the divider the second component of the light signal; an output path (13) for outputting the light signal from the first and second interferometric arms; at least one polarizer (75) arranged either in the first and second interferometric arms, or in the output path, to define an output polarization state for the light signal; and at least one retarder (col. 7 lines 52-59; col. 11 lines 28-44) arranged in at least one of the first and second interferometric arms to generate first and second polarization states in the first and second interferometric arms, respectively, that are orthogonal to each other for at least one polarization state of the input light signal so that the first polarization state is transmitted by the at least one polarizer and the second polarization state is absorbed

Art Unit: 2883

by the at least one polarizer, thereby to output the light signal in the output polarization state defined by the at least one polarizer. (See: col. 4 lines 15-25; col. 5 lines 30-50; col. 7 lines 30-59; col. 9 lines 9-32; col. 11 lines 28-44).

Hawes does not explicitly state "a phase shifter arranged in one of the first and second interferometric arms to ensure that there is an optical path difference between the first and second interferometric arms that is higher than a coherence length specified for the light signal". Hawes does, however, teach using a Mach-Zender interferometer (MZI) (col. 11 lines 19-25) and it is notoriously well known a phase shifter arranged in one of the first and second interferometric arms to ensure that there is an optical path difference between the first and second interferometric arms that is higher than a coherence length specified for the light signal when using an MZI.

One of ordinary skill in the art would have been motivated to make such a combination for the purpose of efficient operation (e.g., less noise).

Thus claim 2 is rejected.

Hawes teaches method of polarization stabilization, comprising: inputting a light signal into an interferometer arrangement comprising first and second arms having an optical path difference therebetween greater than the coherence length of the light signal; applying a retardation to the light signal in at least one of the arms so that subsequent to the retardation the light signal has orthogonal polarization states in the first and second arms for at least one polarization state of the input light signal; and applying a polarization with a polarizer so that one of the orthogonal polarization states

Art Unit: 2883

is absorbed while the other is transmitted. (See: col. 4 lines 15-25; col. 5 lines 30-50; col. 7 lines 30-59; col. 9 lines 9-32; col. 11 lines 28-44).

Thus claim 14 is rejected.

Hawes teaches wherein the polarization is applied subsequent to recombination of the light signal after the first and second arms. (See: col. 4 lines 15-25; col. 5 lines 30-50; col. 7 lines 30-59; col. 9 lines 9-32; col. 11 lines 28-44). Thus claim 16 is rejected.

Hawes teaches further comprising recombining the light signal after the first and second arms in a manner that is insensitive to the polarization state of the light signal input to the interferometer arrangement. (See: col. 4 lines 15-25; col. 5 lines 30-50; col. 7 lines 30-59; col. 9 lines 9-32; col. 11 lines 28-44). Thus claim 17 is rejected.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 6, 8, 9-13 are allowed.

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious wherein the at least one polarizer comprises a first polarizing element placed in the first interferometric arm and a second polarizing element placed in the second interferometric arms in combination with the rest of claim 6.

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious wherein the at least one retarder comprises a first retarding element arranged in the first interferometric arm and a second retarding element arranged in the second interferometric arm in combination with the rest of claim 8.

Art Unit: 2883

The prior art, either alone or in combination, does not disclose or render obvious an optical component comprising: an optical device having an input for receiving an input light signal, the optical device being sensitive to the polarization state of its input signal; and a polarization stabilizing device according to claim 1 arranged to stabilize the polarization state of the input signal prior to supply to the input of the optical device in combination with the rest of claim 9.

Claims 5, 15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Michael P. Mooney whose telephone number is 571-272-2422. The examiner can normally be reached during weekdays, M-F.

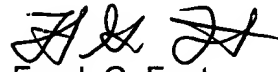
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Frank G. Font can be reached on 571-272-2415. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Art Unit: 2883

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 571-272-1562.



Michael P. Mooney
Examiner
Art Unit 2883



Frank G. Font
Supervisory Patent Examiner
Art Unit 2883

FGF/mpm
9/20/04